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The fundamentalist movement and its effect on the educational system

Abstract

The most rapidly growing segment of American elementary and secondary education is that of private Protestant fundamentalist schools. Between 1965 and 1972 the number of students enrolled in such schools increased from 615,548 to 1,433,000, or 123.4% according to an estimate by the Bureau of the Census. 1 During the past two decades while educators have been learning to deal with the handicapped, bilingual education, busing, affirmative action, in sum, while educators were involved with self and the rush of developments in education and in society, large groups of parents and taxpayers were becoming increasingly disillusioned with their schools. They began to look at educators and their doings with mounting concern.

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THE FUNDAMENTALIST MOVEMENT AND ITS EFFECT ON THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

A Research Paper

Presented to

The Department of School Administration

and Personnel Services

University of Northern Iowa

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts in Education

---

by

Gail Lowe Brown

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

The most rapidly growing segment of American elementary and secondary education is that of private Protestant fundamentalist schools. Between 1965 and 1972 the number of students enrolled in such schools increased from 615,548 to 1,433,000, or 123.4% according to an estimate by the Bureau of the Census.[1]

During the past two decades while educators have been learning to deal with the handicapped, bilingual education, busing, affirmative action, in sum, while educators were involved with self and the rush of developments in education and in society, large groups of parents and taxpayers were becoming increasingly disillusioned with their schools. They began to look at educators and their doings with mounting concern.

The alienated, the disappointed and the irate gathered under the banner of conservatism and/or "back to basic" movement. They looked for and found leaders to voice their dislike for the goals of modern education, its methods, its tools and materials.

The public schools of today are under attack. Members of the New Right are working hard at re-making the public schools into their image or, if not, to change the present system.

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[1]National Center for Education Statistics, Statistics of Non-Public Elementary and Secondary Schools, 1971-1972 (Washington, D.C.: NCES, 1973), pp. 5, 6.

Why is this move being made by parents, in increasing numbers, to extract their children from the public school system? The problem is complex and entails a study of past history of these schools, their goals, and their growing impact on American society.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study is to examine selected aspects of the evolution of the private fundamentalist church school, and its effect upon contemporary society.

Definition of Terms

Christian School/Fundamentalist School

Christian Schools/Fundamentalist Schools are those educational institutions established by certain churches to provide students a program consistent with fundamentalists' beliefs.

Fundamentalism

Fundamentalism is the doctrine of the depravity of man who is redeemed by divine power; doctrine of justification. Literal biblical interpretation is basic to their beliefs.

New Right

New Right is the developing coalition formed among ultra conservative and rightist organizations in America.

Secular Humanist

A Secular Humanist is a believer in the nonreligious studies dealing with human interest and values.

Procedure Used

Periodicals, textbooks, and publications of private fundamentalist schools were studied, as well as the professional literature directed to the development of private and public educational institutions. These sources provided the data for this study.

Organization

This study treats three aspects of the fundamentalist movement in the United States. The literature is organized to focus on the following areas:

1. An analysis of the role of the Protestant/fundamentalist schools in American education, with special attention given to the development in the last 30 years.

2. The current status of the "fundamentalist Christian School" movement, including the legal battles that are showing up, special significance of the Amish struggle for separate schools and a brief focus on the legal status of specific cases in Iowa.

3. Parent attitudes--why do parents send their children to Protestant Fundamentalist Schools?

4. Analysis and Conclusion

Chapter 2

THE DEVELOPMENT OF FUNDAMENTALISM

Various attempts have been made to explain the reasons for the present resurgence of conservative theological belief in America, and in its schools. The consensus is that the current international tensions, coupled with the inability of world political leaders to find satisfactory solution for world problems short of war, is largely responsible for the revival of religion of the more pessimistic sort; that is, religion which distrusts human nature and scorns the dependence upon reason as a guide to salvation. It seems that not only the masses, but that many intellectuals, have little faith in the optimistic concept of the perfectibility of man, which had dominated liberal thought at the start of the twentieth century. Many people have returned to the ancient Christian doctrine of the depravity of man and his inability to reason his way to an acceptable solution of the problems that beset him. The prevalent view today regarding man is that he is a sinner who must be redeemed by divine power. The neo-orthodox theologians, who are prominent in American Protestant circles at present, have also come to regard the unregenerate state of modern man as the primary problem in religion, although they reject many other fundamentalist doctrines. But the significant point to remember is that many theologians are afraid to rely upon reason alone. They have come to rely more on divine power and intervention.[1]

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[1]Kay Stillwell, "C. S. Lewis Modern Christian Writer," His,

Since the end of World War II the enthusiasm for religion has been noticeable in church attendance, revival crusades, and in the greatest program of church construction ever experienced in the United States. Church membership has risen to the phenomenal figure of approximately 100,000,000, the highest in American history.[2] This upsurge in religious interest is seen in the popularity of religious themes in music, in books, in motion pictures, and in the expansion of religious sections in many local newspapers. Religion is discussed in every-day conversation and church attendance has become both popular and fashionable.[3]

The names most frequently heard and associated in connection with mass evangelistic efforts during the current resurgence of religious interest and revivals are those of fundamentalist preachers, with Billy Graham leading the group. The neo-orthodox, perhaps the closest rivals of the fundamentalists, by their own admission do not command the attention of the masses as do the fundamentalists. This is significant when one considers the fact that neo-orthodoxy is prevalent among leaders in the major Protestant denominations and seminaries in the United States. Even so, they have not been as successful in reaching the masses through their preachers as has Billy Graham. The reason for this probably can be explained by suggesting

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January, 1957, p. 14; "Tense Expectancy Grips U.S.," Christian Life, February, 1952, p. 75; Joseph T. Bayly, 856: "This Year of Our Lord," His, January, 1956, p. 1-4.

[2]Time, September 19, 1956, p. 76; Century, October 3, 1956, pp. 1124-1125.

[3]Virginia L. Grabill, "Mencken from the Grave," Christianity Today, December 24, 1956, p. 17; Cleveland Plain Dealer, April 9, 1956, p. 37.

that a latent fundamentalism exists among most Protestants in the United States, and that their inherent religious interest has suddenly come to surface to be expressed more actively than in recent years. However, it should be stated that the same existent conditions which stirred the Protestant masses have had a similar effect upon other religious groups, for example, the Roman Catholics and the Jews.[4]

The European Legacy

Although religious fundamentalism as an organized movement in American Protestant Christianity is comparatively youthful, the tradition from which it sprang is very old: some scholars trace the spirit of fundamentalism back to the Reformation. There are fundamentalist leaders, however, who declare it goes back to the New Testament period and the apostles, and that the Reformation only restated the neglected fundamentals of the gospel. William Ward Ayer, a popular radio evangelist in New York City, emphasized this point in a speech he delivered during the Cleveland convention of the National Association of Evangelicals in April, 1956. He said:

> Fundamentalism represents a resurgence of ancient practices, which began not with Martin Luther but at Pentecost. Fundamentalism is apostolic and the doctrine of justification goes back to Paul. That branch from which the fundamentalist movement sprang lived obscurely through the ages and had never been completely silenced even in the Dark Ages.[5]

Ayer was probably trying to establish what is commonly believed by the

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[4]James Deforest Murch, Cooperation Without Compromise (Gran Rapids: Wm. B. Erdman's Publishing Co., 1956), pp. 113-116; E. C. Homrighausen, "Billy Graham and the Protestant Predicament," Century, July 18, 1956, pp. 848-849; Time, July 23, 1956, p. 51.

[5]Notes from a speech delivered by William Ward Ayer in Cleveland, Ohio, April, 1956.

fundamentalists: (1) that they do not owe any former allegiance to the Roman Catholic heirarchy or to any other denomination for their existence, and (2) that the source of fundamentalist theology is the Bible. Thus, in no sense can the fundamentalists be accused of being a disaffected religious body suddenly severed from the main stream of Christianity or from Catholicism and Protestantism.[6] They still claim their loyalty to the primitive teachings of the New Testament church. Ayer said:

> What fundamentalism did was to waken the slumbering apostolicism from lethargy. The theme of the Reformation, like the cry of the fundamentalists today, was "back to the Bible and the Apostles," with no mediator between men and God except Christ. Fundamentalists are in the direct line of succession to those preaching this same message.[7]

On the other hand, it is safe to conclude that much of what the fundamentalists teach today are doctrines which were delineated during the Reformation period and were further clarified through subsequent developments in Protestant Christianity. The Reformers did not appeal for a revolution in theology, as though they were teaching something new, but they complained that the Roman Catholic Church had permitted certain fundamental principles to become obscured by their ecclesiastical authority and by some of their ritual. It was during the Reformation that the cry for less ecclesiastical authority was heard and an appeal for more reliance on the Bible was demanded. The fundamentalists are still echoing the Reformers in this respect.[8]

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[6]J. M. Caroll, The Trail of Blood (Lexington: Byran-Page Printing Co., 1931), p. 225.

[7]Ayer, loc. cit.

[8]James Burtt, Types of Religious Philosophy (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1951), pp. 149-159.

Martin Luther, the most familiar figure during Reformation, rebelled against what he and his followers considered to be a mechanical operation of the Roman Catholic ritual. The reformers declared there was little or no concomitant moral change in those who observed the Roman Catholic rites. Luther turned to the Pauline doctrine of justification by faith, a doctrine he accepted after reading Augustine's views that salvation from sin cannot come by human merit, but by the gracious act of God. In defense of this principle Luther appealed to the authority of the Bible, which he regarded as infallible, and to which he said before his Roman Catholic inquisitors, "my conscience is captive."[9]

History shows that the Lutheran movement successfully detached itself from papal authority, and since the Reformation Protestantism generally has been characteristically anti-Catholic. Since the twentieth century, with the rise of liberal influences in thought, this anti-Catholic spirit has subsided to a great extent. However, the fundamentalists have continued the anti-Catholic attitude, largely because of their stern and rigid dependence upon the authority of the Bible and their emnity against any organization or people not showing a similar regard for it. William Ward Ayer declared in his Cleveland speech: "Anti-Catholicism is found in the Bible and the evangelicals, therefore, are on scriptural grounds when they resist the papal claims of apostolicity."[10]

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[9]George M. Stephenson, The Puritan Heritage (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1952), pp. 11-13.

[10]Ayer, loc. cit.

The doctrines which first became important in American churches were those enunciated by John Calvin (1509-1564), who found Luther's doctrines acceptable in most of their essentials. But Calvin, who was rated by scholars as a cold logician, took Luther's doctrines several steps further and developed a theological system that was more rigid in many of its demands. Besides teaching the doctrine of God's sovereignty, which in itself was stern enough, Calvin viewed the church as a factor in the rest of life, and he extended the scope of its responsibility and its authority to include civic and social matters as well as religious concernments. Calvin's ideals for all Christians were "thrift, industry, and sobriety," which permitted men to prosper economically without the fear of being regarded as tainted by the sin of avarice. However, Calvin's ideals were eventually misconstrued to mean regulation of all petty activities among church people, such as card playing, dancing, and unnecessary frolicking. Thus, both logical aspects of Calvin's theology and the illogical interpretation of it were synthesized into one system of religious thought. This modified version of Calvinism, surviving to the present, has been inherited for the most part by the fundamentalists with only minor variations.[11]

The American Legacy

Calvinism first came to America during the early part of the seventeenth century by way of the pilgrim and Puritan migrations from

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[11]Eugene C. Bewekes, et al., Experience, Reason and Faith: A Survey in Philosophy and Religion (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1940), pp. 458-459, 463.

England, and both were irreconcilable enemies of the Roman Catholic Church. These two groups were originally members of the Anglican Church, but because the parent body procrastinated and refused to eliminate the vestiges of popery from its worship, they separated and formed independent religious bodies, although the Puritans preferred to remain as a reforming body within the Anglican Church. Thus, besides introducing the Calvinistic version of Protestant Christianity into America, these two groups immediately established two fundamentalistic traditions for dissenting groups to follow. They were: (1) the emphatic anti-Catholic spirit of Protestantism, and (2) the principle of separation as a method by which religious minorities might safeguard beliefs and protect themselves from the domination of the majority.[12]

The source and vitality of Puritan theology was reliance upon the authorized King James Version (1611) of the Bible, which came to be regarded as the official Protestant version of Scripture. The King James Version soon became part of the common tongue. Even to this day in certain mountain areas of the South people still speak the English in ordinary conversation which was common during the seventeenth century, and much of this must be attributed to the influence of the English Bible.[13] Recently, following the publication of the Revised Standard Version of the Bible in 1952 by the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America, a

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[12]Stephenson, op. cit., pp. 14-17.

[13]Josiah Combs, "Language of the Southern Highlanders," Publication of the Modern Language Association of America, December, 1931, pp. 1302-1322.

preference for the King James Version of the Bible was vociferously demonstrated by most fundamentalists, who called the new version a corruption imposed upon Christians by the modernists.[14]

Until 1690 the churches which favored church-state unity and an intellectual approach to religion were supreme in colonial America. But after that date left-wing evangelical sects, largely comprised of non-English stock from German pietist and independent Lutheran and Reformed groups, began to increase rapidly in the colonies. The pietists for the most part came from common people who, by the nature of their case, stressed personal piety and rejected institutional religion and state-church unity.[15] These groups, along with the Pilgrim separatists and the Baptists, create a condition in the religious life of the colonies that had some direct bearing upon the uniquely American development of revivalism. It was first tried by Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758) to induce those in New England whose religious ardor had cooled to take a more positive part in the life of the church.[16] Revivalism "was a way of bringing Christianity to individuals and it stressed the fact that salvation depended upon individual decisions, that religion was a personal concern and not primarily an institutional matter."[17]

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[14]"Bible Burnings," Beacon, January 1, 1953, p. 1.

[15]William Warren Sweet, The American Churches: An Interpretation (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1948), pp. 11-25.

[16]William Warren Sweet, The Story of Religion in America (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1939), pp. 185-186.

[17]William Warren Sweet, Religion in the Development of American Culture (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1948), p. 146.

The period from the eighteen-thirties to the Civil War showed the people to be restless, confused, and dissatisfied. This restlessness was manifested in all aspects of life, including religion. During this period a number of utopian schemes with a religious foundation were tried; various religious organizations, some of them bizarre, were proliferated in the "burned-over-district" of central and western New York, an area in which revivalists had worked intensively. The fear of popery reached a new high as a consequence of the immigration of a large number of Irish Catholics. The disappearance of William Morgan in 1826, which was charged to the Masons, resulted in the rise of anti-Masonry among most Protestant groups. Some of the developments in religion during this period lasted but a short time. However, many of the organizations which were spawned at the time, such as Mormonism, Adventism, and Spiritualism, have been subjects of concern to the fundamentalists.[18] The fundamentalists regard the Mormons and the Spiritualists as unscriptural cults, and have proliferated a body of literature to convince others why this is true. Spiritualism, which came into existence after reports of the Fox sisters were circulated telling of their experiences with unseen spiritual powers, has been described by the fundamentalists as a religion controlled by the devil and his demons. The fundamentalists support their contention with Scripture.[19]

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[18]Carl Wittke, We Who Built America (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1939), pp. 477-482.

[19]Jan K. Baalan, The Chaos of the Cults (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Erdmans Publishing Co., 1942), pp. 18-38.

The most important development during this period for the future of fundamentalism was the rise of millenialism to a new prominence in American religious life. William Miller, a farmer with varied religious experiences became the leader of millenialism or Millerism, as the movement was called. Those people, who probably were impatient with conditions as they found them at that time, longed for the establishment of a divine utopia on earth which would be realized when Christ returned to the earth with His saints to rule in person for a thousand years. Miller discovered a formula after studying books of Daniel and Revelation, which enabled him to prognosticate the date for the second advent of Christ to take place on March 21, 1843. Of course the event never occurred and the Millerites were disappointed, but their hopes did not fade completely.[20] Millerism is still perpetuated in contemporary adventist groups, and Millerism is one of the fundamental principles of the fundamentalist movement.

The period after the Civil War to 1900 was one during which two distinct cultures began to clash, the spiritual and the secular. Various discoveries in experimental science not only revealed the potential capacity of men's minds, but they also began to change men's views regarding biblical cosmology, because the new scientific outlook had challenged the place of revelation as a source of knowledge. Churchmen were shocked when schools eliminated many religious classes, while adding secular subjects in their curricula. They became alarmed when evolution became a working hypothesis in almost every discipline, including religion. Darwin's hypothesis of no fixity in the species,

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[20]Sweet, op. cit., pp. 305-311.

together with the postulations of the geologists, struck at the base of the theological cosmology that the earth and men had been created in six days by divine fiat. The geologists postulated the materialist origin of the universe eons before 4004 B.C., the date which had usually been given by the older theologians.[21]

The challenges to traditional theology concerned the conservative theologians, and the first stirrings of the fundamentalist controversy were observed, a controversy which also was a result of a rapid and turbulent transition from an agrarian society to a highly technical urban social order with different sets of beliefs. America's homogeneous population began to change into heterogeneous types after the Civil War. The rapid rise of science and industry, with its need for a new and increased supply of labor, brought with it a massive immigration mostly from countries having Roman Catholic traditions. Their languages proved to be a formidable defense against their being proselyted by the Protestants; at the same time it also formed a barrier that prevented hospitable relations between them to develop. Consequently, the ancient enmity between Protestants and the Roman Catholics was accentuated.[22]

Out of the needs of the immigrants a new system of religious ethics began to compete with older American religious ethics. The latter was founded upon the evangelical tradition which held that the primary responsibility of the church was religious. On the other hand,

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[21]V. Raymond Edman, "From Luther to Barth," Moody Monthly, August, 1956, pp. 23-23.

[22]Stewart G. Cole, The History of Fundamentalism (New York: Richard R. Smith, Inc., 1931), pp. 16-20.

economic life was regarded as a separate area where character was stimulated and developed through competition between individuals. The new ethic was largely European, being transmitted to America by a predominantly Roman Catholic immigration, by people conditioned to expect ecclesiastical intercessions for them. In this system, the sphere of activity of the church was not restricted primarily to doctrine; the church was expected to act in the economic and political realms as well, where the individuals could not do very well by themselves.

The nineteenth century ended with a decomposition of medieval theology. The chief issues in religion at that time were between a prescientific and scientific expression of it. The conservatives, who comprised those who held the Bible as absolute revelation of God, were regarded as adherents of a prescientific epistemology hardly compatible with modern developments.[23] Those who applied the methods of science to the study of the Bible and religion were referred to as modernists.[24] The conservative leaders became alarmed as they saw their theological foundations crumble and a paralyzing indifference engulf their constituency. Of course, modernity was blamed for all this. And it probably never occurred to the conservative leaders that the growing heterogenous character of American life, with its multifarious social and economic problems, was largely responsible for the shifting of the attention of the rank-and-file of conservatism to

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[23]Arnold S. Nash, ed., Protestant Thought in the Twentieth Century (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1951), pp. 6-7.

[24]"Is Evangelical Theology Changing?", Christian Life, March, 1956, p. 18.

more immediate problems.[25] The conservative leaders were convinced that the age of apostasy had begun, and that the stage was being prepared for the coming of the anti-Christ.[26]

The conservatives tried desperately to stem the tide of liberalism by consolidating their own position and by resorting to vilification in order to accomplish their purpose. Their leaders began to meet in Bible conferences where the chief emphasis was the prophetic portions of the Scriptures, teachings which not only emphasized the second coming of Christ but also those which provided a warning against the apostasy which was destroying faith in the Bible through devastating scholarship. Scholars were not frightened by these ominous declarations. The only success the conservatives probably enjoyed was among themselves, for their own warnings seemed to fortify them in their efforts to defend the Bible and their historic principles. Between 1876 and 1900 several conferences were held in strategic points in the United States. These must be regarded as embryonic stirrings of the fundamentalist movement. The most important conference was conducted in 1895 at Niagara, where a declaration anticipating the fundamentalist five points of 1910 was formulated. The conservatives at that conference declared the traditional Protestant Christianity must be regarded as having five important and indispensable poles: (1) the inerrancy of the Scriptures, (2) the virgin birth, (3) the deity of Jesus Christ, (4) the substitutionary atonement,[27]

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[25]Richard Hofstadter, The Age of Reform: From Bryan to F.D.R. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1955), pp. 7-11.

[26]"Be Ever on Guard," King's Business, November, 1916, p. 982.

[27]Louis Gasper, The Fundamentalist Movement (Paris: Mouton and

and (5) the physical resurrection of Jesus Christ and His bodily return.[28]

Christian Day School Movement

Gradually a new movement in education began to have widespread acceptance among the fundamentalists as an alternative to public education with which many fundamentalist parents were dissatisfied. The rapid rise of the Christian Day School Movement saw an enrollment rise to over 1,000,000 during this period. The rapidity of its growth, together with the existence of other private schools in the United States, indicated that probably for the first time since the Civil War public education was seriously challenged.[29] The National Association of Christian Schools, the organization operating the Christian Day School Program, was organized in 1947 through the initial efforts of the National Association of Evangelicals to provide elementary and secondary school education for children of fundamentalist parents.[30]

Several reasons can be given to explain the growth of the Christian Day School Movement which came into existence immediately following World War II. For a long time before World War II the educational theories of John Dewey, commonly known as progressive

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Co., 1963), p. 11.

[28]Cole, op. cit., pp. 34-35.

[29]Paul Blanshard, American Freedom and Catholic Power (Boston: Beacon Press, 1949), p. 24.

[30]James DeForest Murch, Co-operation, pp. 91-92; "For Such a Time as This," (pamphlet published by The National Association of Christian Schools, N.D.), pp. 2-4).

education, had been under constant attack. Following the war when fear affected the judgment of the American people, largely as an aftermath of the war and the postwar threat of attack from Russia, the attack against progressive education in the American schools was increased in various parts of the United States, more notably in Englewood (New Jersey), Arlington (Virginia), and Pasadena (California). In fact, some people were concerned that what the schools faced was "little less than a nationally directed conspiracy."[31] Allen A. Zoll, founder of the American Patriots (now defunct and at one time on the United States Attorney General's list as a facist organization), Gerald L. K. Smith, noted anti-Semite, and a large fundamentalist faction became virulent antagonists in the battle waged against the public schools. This was nothing new for the fundamentalists; their battle against modern education, which began before the twenties and was magnified by the Scopes trial in 1925, has never abated.[32]

However, Zoll was the single figure during the postwar period who captured the nation's attention in his organized campaign against the public schools through the National Council for American Education, which he also helped organize. Zoll's organized campaign, which undoubtedly influenced the fundamentalists, reached its zenith in 1951. After three years of service as Superintendent of Pasadena Schools, Willard Goslin, reputed to be one of the leading school administrators in the United States, was forced to resign after people were stampeded

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[31]Norman D. Fleshner, "Conspiracy Against Our Schools," Register, January, 1952, p. 16.

[32]Fletcher, op, cit., pp. 15-16.

into demanding his resignation.[33] Wherever the campaigns against the schools were waged the pattern of attack was identical. Sweeping accusations were made charging school administrators, teachers and the National Education Association with using the public schools to implant communist and socialist ideas in the minds of the children, as a plot to sabotage free enterprise and American democracy. The progressive theory of education was blamed for the postwar epidemic of juvenile delinquency, while "the 3 R's" were once more glorified as the end-of-all of education.[34] Also any attempt on the part of the teachers to instill a desire for international understanding in children was labelled socialistic. Complaints were made that the principles of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization was being taught to them.[35]

Fundamentalist parents expressed their general dissatisfaction over the public school curriculum. They had been taught through propaganda against the public schools to believe the public schools were not only moving away from religion and the educational tradition of the original settlers of this country, but that the curriculum was inadequate to cope with problems of a moral nature which were at the base of juvenile delinquency and adult criminality. They were persuaded to believe delinquency could be quickly decreased only where education had religious perspective and disciplinarian methods were employed. This

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[33]Arthur D. Morse, "Who's Trying to Ruin our Schools?", McCalls, September, 1951, p. 26.

[34]Louis H. Gerteis, "How We Fought the Zoll Forces," Register, January, 1952, p. 8.

[35]William E. Drake, The American School in Transition (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1955), pp. 481-482.

was more practical for character building than progressive education, which encourages self-expression with a minimum of restraint and supervision by the teachers. Children, like adults, could not be expected to develop properly without Christian guidance because they too are affected by the Fall.[36]

Wilbur M. Smith, professor of English Bible at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California, at the risk of being classified an obscuratinist, criticized public education for the drift of religion from theism and supernaturalism to a religion of democracy based on humanism and naturalism.[37] Other fundamentalists said that Christian education was the crutch needed to help pupils when they met the theory of evolution for the first time. Public education was also criticized because other activities were offered which fundamentalists charged were harmful and demoralizing, such as instruction in dancing and showing of movies.[38]

There were some fundamentalists who defended public education. Frank E. Gaebelein and Harold C. Ockenga were the two most prominent fundamentalist leaders to do so. Gaebelein said:

> The place of public education in America is secure. So essential is it to our democracy that without a national system of public schools America could not for a single generation continue free.[39]

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[36]Russell T. Hitt, "Treason in Our Textbooks," Christian Life, April, 1950, pp. 10-12.

[37]Wilbur M. Smith, The Increasing Peril (Wheaton: Van Kampen Press, 1947), pp. 9-11.

[38]"Is the Christian Day School a Crutch?", Western Voice, July 10, 1956, p. 2.

[39]Frank E. Gaebelein, Christian Education in a Democracy (New York: Oxford University Press, 1951), p. 99.

Ockenga likewise referred to American public school system as "the bulwark of democracy."[40] He also stated that American public schools were neutral in matters of religion and could be nothing else under the Constitution. He did not accept the radical statements of some fundamentalists that teachers in public schools were generally anti-Christian. Furthermore, he said, there was no reproach to secular education since it is neither religious nor anti-religious.[41]

Some fundamentalists waged a campaign to remove certain textbooks from the public schools because they were allegedly Marxist and atheistic propaganda designed to wreck American democracy and destroy faith in supernaturalism. Mark Fakkema, director of the National Association of Christian Schools, prodded the National Association of Evangelicals to prepare a resolution requesting the House Un-American Activities Committee to investigate subversion in textbooks.[42] Fundamentalist parents were also urged by others to campaign actively for elimination of certain textbooks from the public schools. The attack was centered around books which criticized the United States and those which taught evolution. Any book which alluded to the Genesis account of creation as a myth was extremely objectionable to the fundamentalists. Some of the books placed on the fundamentalist Index were: Mavor, General Biology; Anabel Williams-Ellis, A Child's Story of the World; Washburne, The Story of

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[40]Harold John Ockenga, "What Cardinal Spellman Wants in Our Schools," UEA, October, 1, 1949, p. 9.

[41]Ibid.

[42]Russell T. Hitt, "Treason in our Textbooks," op. cit.

the Earth; Harold Rugg and Louise Krueger, The First Book of the Earth.[43]

The rapid growth of the Christian Day School Movement can also be attributed to other factors. During the postwar period the nation remained relatively prosperous. Parents therefore had more money to give toward the support of private schools. Because of the increased birth rate, overcrowding and shortage of teachers occurred in public schools and some fundamentalist parents decided to establish private schools to alleviate the condition. The motivation to do this can also be attributed to the propaganda that had been released against the public schools. Parents were persuaded to believe the public schools had downgraded academically and that standards of achievement were higher in Christian day schools. Finally, the revival in religion which occurred during the 1900's may have had an impact upon the development of these schools.[44]

The Christian Day Schools grew "with the rapidity of a grass-roots movement."[45] Mark Fakkema said the sudden upsurge in the establishment of Christian Day Schools was the occasion for and not the result of the establishment of the National Association of Christian Schools. At first parents tried to enroll their children in Christian schools which had been operating for a long time, such as the Lutheran and Reformed church schools. The leaders of the schools in the

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[43]Cora A. Reno, "Students Beware," Christian Life, January, 1951, pp. 17, 55.

[44]"Why Johnny Goes to Christian School," Christian Life, June, 1957, pp. 12-32.

[45]Gaegelein, op. cit., p. 105.

Reformed tradition, or the National Union of Christian Schools, became concerned over the rapid rise of enrollment in their schools of non-Reformed children. Because they wanted to preserve their Reformed traditions, they asked the National Association of Evangelicals in April, 1947 to consider the establishment of an organization to meet the educational needs of fundamentalists. The National Association of Evangelicals acted promptly and on May 13, 1947 the National Association of Christian Schools was established on the same doctrine basis as the National Association of Evangelicals.[46] By 1955 one hundred forty-four schools with an enrollment of 13,000 pupils were affiliated with the National Association of Christian Schools. Thirty-five of these forty-four were in California, indicating the tremendous advance made by fundamentalists in that state. Although the Christian Day School Movement is not strong in every state, there is reason to believe from the developments of the past decade that it is beginning to gain momentum.[47]

Bible Institutes

The conservatives were also disturbed by the rising tide of secularism in the nation's schools and the modernizing influence in seminaries. They tried to meet this situation in two important ways. First, they sought to maintain their grip on those schools which seemed to be loyal to their tradition, and they succeeded in some

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[46] Evangelical Christian Day School Movement (Chicago: National Association of Christian Schools, 1952), pp. 3-4.

[47] Christian Day School Directory for the School Year 1954-1955 (Chicago: National Association of Christian Schools), pp. 2-11.

instances. Next, they began to direct their energies toward the establishment of conservative schools with the Bible as the central textbook. This effort gave rise to the Bible Institute movement.[48]

At first the growth of the Bible Institutes was very slow. Up until 1900 only nine Bible Institutes had been organized. Between 1900 and 1930, during the initial resistance of the fundamentalists against modernism, forty-nine such schools were organized. After this period, presumably because the fundamentalists had been awakened by the issues which were magnified by the Scopes trial, Bible Institutes began to spawn in every section of the United States. No part of the United States escaped the impact of their establishment. From 1930 to 1940, thirty-five Bible Institutes were founded, and from 1940 to 1950 sixty more were added. This made the two decades from 1930 to 1950 one of the most active and productive periods in fundamentalist education. Ninety-five schools had been established during the period from 1930 to 1950, almost doubling those established up to 1930.[49]

The original purpose of the Bible Institute was to provide opportunities for lay people to obtain specialized knowledge in the English Bible, thereby enabling them to participate in the work of the church and in personal evangelism. Little or no capacity of critical thinking or judgment in research and scholarship was required of

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[48]Gaius Atkins, Religion in Our Times (New York: Round Table Press, 1932), pp. 40-55.

[49]"Bible Institutes and Colleges" (typed report of the Accrediting Association of Bible Institutes and Bible Colleges, n.d.) p. 2.

Bible Institute students. Therefore, most Bible Institutes admitted their applicants regardless of prior academic preparation.[50]

Evenutally Bible Institutes gained importance, particularly after the issues between the fundamentalists and the modernists became clearly defined. Bible Institutes now began to train missionaries, pastors, evangelists, and gospel musicians, to mention only the most important specialities of the Christian service. The Bible Institutes became the citadel of the oldtime religion where students during their formative years became "set" before they were exposed to liberal education. There they were taught to defend the Bible as the "Word of God" against all attacks of modern infedelity."[51]

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[50]"Who's Who of Christian Education," Christian Life, June, 1952, pp. 19-20.

[51]The Catalog of the Simpson Bible Institute, 1951-1952, p. 11.

Chapter 3

LEGAL ISSUES

There has been a long standing concern over the moral and religious education of the young--the predominant rationale for the creation of private schools. To understand the crux of the movement to fundamentalism in recent times it is necessary to look at its beginnings, i.e. the Amish movement and its impact, as well as current legal issues being brought to focus, especially those cases of recent interest in Iowa.

Amish Cases

The continued conflict in recent years between the Older Amish schools and local school officials in Ohio, Kansas, Wisconsin, Iowa and Michigan dramatized two radically different approaches to the education of young people. The educational philosophy of the deeply religious Plain People, who traced their history back to the Anabaptist movement of the Protestant Reformation, rested on the desire to perpetuate the ideals of a small, rural, self-sufficient, religious society, within the context of a closely knit family and church community. The public school in the form of the little red country school house suited the Amish well enough. Though even its modest facilities included modern improvements that were proscribed in Amish homes, the country school treated the Amish child as a member of the community rather than as an outsider, and managed to impart

satisfactorily the basic skills in reading, writing, and arithmetic through the eighth grade. That and a little contact with "English" children were all the Amish asked of the school.

But as the era of the farm and small town gave way to urbanization, the country school was replaced by the consolidated, comprehensive school in which the Amish child felt quite out of place. With mass education came the trend toward stereotyping of pupils, the professionalization of teaching, beaureaucratic control, compulsory education laws, and minimum standards. As the schools became more standardized in order to better serve a more technological society, they functioned for the Amish as a culturally alienating and disorienting influence. The whole trend of the public schools posed to the Plain People a dire threat to their beliefs, their culture and their very existence as a group. So they did what many dissenting minorities have done all through American history--they built their own schools. In 1937, the establishment of Amish schools began in earnest.[1]

They were a "problem" to the public school officials legally responsible for enforcing attendance and other school laws which the Amish refused to obey. In one of these skirmishes, a local Iowa official reportedly said, "We are going to assimilate these people, whether they want to be assimilated or not."[2] But the unyielding Amish thought otherwise. During the most recent embroilment at New

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[1] John A. Hosteller, Amish Society, rev. ed. (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1968), Ch. 9.

[2] Ibid., p. 205. For a dramatic account of the Iowa showdown see Donald A. Erickson, Ed., Public Controls for Nonpublic Schools (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), pp. 15-57.

Glarus, Wisconsin, over the refusal of Amish children to attend the public high school after completing the eighth grade in their own parochial school, a bearded Amish father said, "We don't want our children involved in worldly things. Eight grades in our school is all we need."[3]

The Amish case rested, in the last analysis, on the freedom to practice and transmit a particular religious culture and a way of life without unnecessary interference or harassment by the state. They were by all accounts, hardworking, thrifty, productive farmers, with a strong preference for a simple life in unpolluted, rustic surroundings. Crime, unemployment, juvenile delinquency and abject poverty were virtually unknown among them. They were conscientious objectors not only to military service but to war, to mass society, to modern technology and to the defecation of the state. Because of their self-chosen isolation the Amish did not fulfill the conventional ideal of the good citizen in modern nationalized society. Unequivocally, it was God, not the state, to whom they gave their highest obedience and loyalty.

The action against the Amish in Hazelton, Iowa, was prompted, it seemed clear, not by the concern for the well-being of Amish children, but by antagonism. The Iowa school code, however it was intended, provided a convenient instrument for the persecution of an

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[3] New York Times, February 16, 1971, p. 35. The Wisconsin Supreme Court overturned an earlier ruling in favor of the public schools, saying, "There is not such a compelling state interest in two years of high school education as will justify the burden it places upon the appellants' free exercise of religion." The Wisconsin authorities have appealed the decision to the Supreme Court of the U.S. This marks the first time that a state compulsory education has been successfully challenged on grounds of religious liberty.

unpopular minority, harnessing public power to the wagon of local prejudice. But could public officials have condemned the Amish schools on more rationale grounds? How could educators view the way the Plain People prepare their young for adulthood?

On the surface, the issue seemed clear cut. Demanding that all children be given a "decent education," numerous state legislatures have established minimum standards for all schools. Repeatedly the Older Order Amish violated these standards.

J. J. Jorgensen, then Buchanan County Superintendent of Schools, was the first educator to yield to the demands for punitive action, possibly because of his board, which was drawn entirely from the county where the hostility was centered. Jorgensen did not proceed on his own volition. On November 24, 1962, acting on information filed by Jorgensen, Buchanan County Attorney William O'Connell prosecuted ten Amishmen before a justice of the peace for failing to send their children to schools with certified teachers. All ten were fined. Eight refused to pay on religious grounds and elected to spend three days in jail. Next, O'Connell sought an injunction to close the Old Order schools, but the district court pointed out that there was no statutory basis for such action. O'Connell's handling of the case was widely debated and in the next Republican primary he was trounced.

In January, 1963, at the urging of the beleagured county superintendent, the Oelwein board offered to run the two Amish schools temporarily if Dan Borntreger's group would agree to send all seventh and eighth grade students to Hazelton at once and all other pupils within two years. The proposal was rejected. In October, 1963, the attorney for the Amish, William Sindlinger, sought unsuccessfully in

district court to have his clients exempted from the law demanding certified teachers. He tried to persuade the Oelwein board not to oppose the petition. The board refused. Its position was becoming more rigid.

In 1964, another compromise was attempted. At the suggestion of the State Superintendent Paul Johnston, the Oelwein board offered to provide special ungraded classrooms for Amish children in Hazelton school on a one year basis. The Amish would not concur.

The turning point in the long series of delaying actions came in September, 1965. An Oelwein school board member whose term was not expiring resigned, and several others decided not to seek reelection; so four new members were placed on the seven man body. The Amish affair had an important behind-the-scenes issue in the election. In response to adverse national publicity, sentiments in Oelwein had become less sympathetic toward the Amish. The new members of the board had implied they would deal more firmly than their predecessors with the Plain People.

For a number of weeks, local leaders had known they were in for trouble. In response to their call for aid, Iowa's attorney general, then Lawrence Scalise, had summoned County Attorney Harlan Lemon and two Amish representatives to Des Moines. This meeting also was doomed to defeat.

On January 10, 1966, Governor Hughes conferred separately with Amish leaders and the Oelwein school board. The conference lasted for nearly two hours. Finally the governor emerged and drove the Amish to School No. 1. The Amish agreed that day to lease their schools to the public school district for a nominal sum; the public school board

promised to supply certified teachers to the two schools for the rest of 1965-66 and during 1966-67.

In the 1967 Iowa legislative session, the governor established a special advisory committee of influential citizens who, armed with new arguments and evidence from interested scholars, worked through key senators and representatives to arrange an amendment to the state's minimum educational standards law. It was provided that religious groups could apply for exemption from the provisions of this law. Exemption would be granted for two-year periods only, and only at the discretion of the state superintendent, who had shown little aversion to the treatment the Amish had been accorded thus far. Hazleton's two Amish schools have been granted the necessary exemption and have reopened under the tutelage of uncertified instructors from the Amish community.[4]

Like Iowa, most states with Older Order Amish populations have nevertheless attempted, at one time or another, to compel the Amish to meet the educational standards or demands that apply to everyone else. But the statutes in these states rarely empowered public authorities to close substandard schools; the only means of enforcement was to prosecute, under compulsory attendance laws, parents who send their children to these schools. When Amish parents were fined, jailed, or deprived of their property, those who have acted against them were blistered by angry protests from people sympathetic to the Amish, as in Iowa, and nasty publicity resulted. Elected officials soon found it morally or politically prudent to arrange a truce.

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[4]Erickson, op. cit., pp. 47-48.

The Ohio situation illustrated the impasse that usually results from attempts to impose educational standards on the Amish. Officials of Ohio's Department of Education insisted that virtually all Amish schools in the state were operating in defiance of the statues, but these officials were painfully aware of popular support for the Amish and despaired of enforcing the law without authority to close the schools rather than prosecuting the parents.[5]

Another historical seed of the current criticism of public education was found in the Kanawha County West Virginia textbook controversy of the mid-1970s. The issues surfacing on today's new fundamentalist scene were examined in the literature of such groups as Educational Research Analyst, the Heritage Foundation, and the John Birch Society, all of which exploited the Kanawha textbook controversy.

During the initial stages of the Kanawha conflict, Alice Moore, a leader of the textbook critics, contacted Educational Research Analysts in Longview, Texas, and asked Norma and Mel Gabler, who founded and operate the organization to "send us everything you have on the books the committee is to review."[6] The Gabler's sent reviews of offensive textbooks. They asserted the problem was greater than textbooks; it was progressive and humanistic education which must be opposed. As Textbooks on Trial, now in its fifth printing claims,

> ". . .progressive education threatened to undermine church and home teaching of biblical Christianity and the principles on which America had been founded. It was materialistic, humanistic, atheistic, and socialistic; an ideology foreign to a nation whose motto was 'In God We Trust.'"

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[5]Ibid., p. 51.

[6]James C. Heflex, Textbooks on Trial (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1976), p. 166.

The censorship issue prompted hundreds upon hundreds of New Right (fundamentalists) statements blasting instructional materials used by public schools. Hundreds of incidents in all parts of the U.S. illustrated the work of the New Right. Three brief accounts follow:

> Denver. February, 1982. Bob Stephenson, a Republican state legislator, asks the 181 Colorado school districts to send him lists of books and films used in public schools . . . His plan: to send the lists to Mel and Norma Gabler for "evaluation" . . . Fifty school districts comply immediately; . . . Stephenson becomes a hero of the New Right . . . Fundamentalists applaud his plans to root out "secular humanism" in Colorado schools . . . Stephenson schedules hearings and announces that he will present his findings to the Colorado House of Representatives . . . He will ask that state funding be withheld from any school district using instructional materials with "even hints of humanism."[8]

> Montgomery, Alabama. January, 1982. State senate receives draft of a bill, Textbook Content Standards Act . . . Contains more than a score of provisions, all demanded by fundamentalists . . . Sample: "Before state textbook adoption agency approves a textbook, its members must be satisfied that the materials, where appropriate, shall teach honesty, acceptance of responsibility, respect for those in authority, importance of the work ethic . . ."[9]

> St. David, Arizona. The tracts of Phyllis Schlafly's Eagle Forum appear in the community . . . Many parents are impressed . . . So are school authorities . . . Administrators require that teachers attend a meeting of the Eagle Forum . . . Entire school board shows up . . . Soon afterward, a textbook censorship committee is created . . . The Ginn series of reading books is attacked as "anti-family" and subsequently replaced with series that had not been updated since 1958 . . . Many citizens still wonder what's wrong with the books . . .[10]

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[7] Ibid., p. 32.

[8] Ben Brodinsky, "The New Right: The Movement and Its Impact," Phi Delta Kappan, October, 1982, p. 92.

[9] Ibid.

[10] Ibid.

The "most publicized and most significant case of school censorship on record" began in September 1975 at a statewide conference of Parents of New York United, a very conservative group. A couple of school board members from Island Tree Union Free School District (Long Island, New York), impressed by the presentations, carried home a list of books declared offensive by schoolbook censors in other parts of the U.S.

Weeks later, the school board members entered the school library at night, searched card catalogs, and emerged with a list of books they decided were "vulgar," and "mentally dangerous." Subsequently, the school board ordered that nine books be removed from classrooms and school library shelves.

The result was an uproar in the community. In January, 1977, Steven Pico and four other students challenged the removal of the books. Legal skirmishes went on for five years, as the case moved from Federal District Court to a U.S. Appeals Court. Finally on March 2, 1982, the U.S. Supreme Court heard the case.

When the High Court issued its ruling in the Pico case on June 25, none of the questions were resolved. (Who has primary jurisdiction to determine subject matter in the schools? Did a school board have the constitutional right to restrict access to learning materials if these materials were offensive to some members of the community? Could individual board members be brought to trial on charges that they violated First Amendment rights? Did students have First Amendment protection against interference by the school board in the contents of their libraries and, by extension, in their learning?). The practical effect of the decision was to remand the Pico case to

the U.S. District Court for trial to determine whether the Island Trees school board was guilty of violating the First Amendment.[11]

Legal Issues In Iowa

Charles City, Iowa

James E. Lowden, Jr., of Platteville, Alabama, executive director of the Alabama Christian Education Association testified on October 29, 1982 that there were three reasons Christian schools could not comply with Iowa code. First, Christian schools could not be "equivalent" to public schools because Christian schools were "superior" to public schools in discipline, conduct, attitude and academic achievement. Second, the reporting requirement of the state could lead to more requests and ultimately more control by the state. Third, requiring state certified teachers who have been trained in philosophies alien to Christian beliefs was unacceptable.

The trial has been packed with supporters of the Calvary cause; fundamentalist pastors and educators especially view the court case as significant because of the bearing it will have on similar lawsuits pending around the state and nation.[12]

Mason City, Iowa

A court showdown over state regulation of church-operated schools was virtually guaranteed when the Iowa Board of Public

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[11] Ibid.

[12] Waterloo Courier, "Church Schools Can't be Equivalent; They're Superior," Sunday, October 31, 1982.

Instruction refused to grant the so-called Amish exemption for two independent Baptist schools.

The board, on a 5-1 vote, decided that the parents of students at Suburban Heights Baptist Church School in Fairfield and Calvary Baptist Christian Academy in Charles City should not be excused from compliance with state education laws, including a requirement that their children be taught by state-certified teachers.[13]

Tiffin, Iowa

This was the story of a biblical battle that briefly placed unwilling communities into national limelight. The controversy ended when the voters of the Clear Creek Community School District went to the polls and decided not to adopt the Bible as a supplementary textbook in public classrooms.

The defeat of the issue did not conform with the stereotype that surrounds the national debate over the rise of religion in the schoolhouse. The cliche pitted New Right against old left, conservative Bible-thumpers against "secular humanists."

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[13] Des Moines Register, "Schools Denied Exemption; Court Show Down Expected," Saturday, September 11, 1982.

facilities, per pupil expenditures, library holdings, average class size, and the education and background of teachers which were in some cases grossly inadequate by public school standards.

The Coleman study, a survey that concerned the lack of equal educational opportunity for children of different races, religions, or ethnic origins, found that differences in student achievement in schools of varying quality appeared to be attributable not so much to differences in the quality of the schools themselves but to the differences in the students' family backgrounds and the composition of the peer group. Coleman and his collaborators concluded:

> One implication stands above all: That schools bring little influence to bear on a child's achievement that is independent of his background and social context; and that this very lack of an independent effect means that the inequalities imposed on children by their home, neighborhood, and peer environment are carried along to become the inequalities with which they confront adult life at the end of school.[2]

The report was greeted with a barrage of criticism, both on methodological and substantive grounds, but time and other studies have vindicated the main conclusion.[3] Surveys conducted for the English Plowden report reached essentially the same conclusion as did a study conducted by Professor Jesse Burkhead of Syracuse University, among others[4].

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[2]The Public and Its Problems (New York: H. Holt and Co., 1927), p. 325. See pp. 217-333 for evidence supporting this statement.

[3]For a summary critique of how well Coleman's conclusions stood up three years after the report was issued see Christopher Jencks, "A Repraisal of the Most Controversial Educational Document of our Time," New York Times Magazine, August 10, 1969.

[4]Jesse Burkhead, Thomas Fox, and John W. Holland, Input and Output in Large-City High Schools (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1967).

The bearing that this conclusion has on private schools is apparent. As a general rule the home background and socioeconomic status of nonpublic school patrons as a group are clearly above the average for the U.S. population as a whole, although there are, as one would expect, substantial variations in this respect both among and within the various school types. The patrons of independent schools, i.e. Protestant fundamentalist schools, are the most advantaged in socioeconomic terms. While the Proestant schools serve a more typically middle-class constituency, the Episcopal school patrons resemble those of the independent schools, while the patrons of the evangelical "Christian" Schools typically include relatively more blue-collar constituents.

But the socioeconomic background was neither the only nor the most important factor in the environment of the home or the school. Subtle differences in cultural traditions which pertain to the way children were reared in the home and the extent to which the home and the school were supportive of each other might have a profound effect on the academic performance of children. Though these influences did not lend themselves to precise measurement or exact documentation, abundant evidence came to light, both in a general survey and in school visits, that the home nuture of children in nonpublic schools as well as the home-school relationship was generally conducive to learning and to wholesome student-teacher relationships. This was not surprising in view of the voluntary nature of the "contract" between patrons and schools. The parents chose the school because they believed the environment to be right for the child, and the school chose the pupil because he was believed to be suited to the school

environment; both the patrons and the school had a stake in seeing that the contract was fulfilled satisfactorily. And back of these choices there were usually shared sub-cultural ethno-religious or class traditions which persisted invisibly for long periods even through substantial changes in socioeconomic status or in other apsects of the total environment.

Parents began to look at educators and their personal causes with mounting disgust. The rapidly increasing population of private Protestant fundamentalist schools was phenonmenal in itself, between 1965 and 1975 the number of students enrolled in such schools increased from 615,548 to 1,433,000 or 134.4%, according to an estimate by the Bureau of the Census.[5]

Research was conducted in early 1979 on these schools in Kentucky and Wisconsin. Research showed that these fundamentalist schools were growing rapidly in both states at present. The number of fundamentalist schools in Kentucky had increased from eight in 1969 to 33 in 1978, or 313%. In Wisconsin the number increased from five to 26 during the same period--420%. Enrollment in Kentucky fundamentalist schools increased from 787 in 1969 to 1,502 in 1978, or 272%.[6] This study also found that 72% of Kentucky and 50% of Wisconsin fundamentalist schools did not belong to any national "Christian" school organization, suggesting that the total number of students

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[5]Department of Health Education and Welfare, Statistics of Public Elementary and Secondary Schools (Washington, D.C.: National Center for Education Statistics, 1976), p. 6.

[6]Virginia Davis Nordin and William Lloyd Turner, "More Than Segregation Academics: The Growing Protestant Fundamentalist Schools," Phi Delta Kappan, February, 1980, p. 392.

enrolled in fundamentalist schools in the U.S. was substantially larger than the totals reported by the four national organizations (the National Association of Christian Schools, the American Association of Christian Schools, the Association of Christian Schools International, and Christian Schools International).

While some of the Kentucky schools appeared to have profited by widespread public opposition to racial integration, the growth of the fundamentalist schools in rural Wisconsin, where integration was not a factor, indicated that "Christian" education was a national, not a regional, phenomenon. Unlike the segregation academies that appeared in the South, these schools did not appear to attract students from a cross section of the community. Parents who enrolled their children in these schools tended to come from churches of the sponsoring denomination or from churches holding similar doctrinal positions. The parents and students who patronized them were regular in church attendance and participated actively in the life of their congregation.

As part of the above research, William Turner analyzed two fundamentalist schools in Louisville, Kentucky, and one such school in Madison, Wisconsin. Approximately twenty of these schools have been founded in Louisville during the last decade, and it was frequently asserted that they were being used as one-year "havens" by parents wishing to avoid forced busing. This research did not support that assertion, as the percentage of students in the two fundamentalist schools who were subject to busing during the current school term was smaller than the percentage of students in the general population. Furthermore, the average student in the survey was found to have been enrolled in his or her present school for a period of four years. Only

one of the 68 families surveyed in the Louisville fundamentalist schools was using the nonpublic schools as a "haven" to avoid busing for one year.[7]

While there was no question that nonpublic enrollments in Louisville have increased substantially since the implementation of forced busing in the fall of 1975, families who were entering the nonpublic sector were not doing so on a one year basis. This research found that once parents have decided to leave the public sector of education, they usually withdrew all of their school-age children simultaneously; and once they had entered the nonpublic sector they tended to remain there for the duration of their children's school careers. There was also little tendency to move from one nonpublic school to another. The majority of persons surveyed also indicated their willingness and ability to continue bearing the cost of nonpublic tuitions for the foreseeable future.

Although the two cities surveyed were geographically distant and have differing cultural backgrounds, fundamentalist parents in both gave the same reasons for withdrawing their children from public schools. Most frequently they alleged poor academic quality of public education, a perceived lack of discipline in public schools, and the fact that public schools were believed to be promulgating a philosophy of secular humanism that these parents found inimical to their religion beliefs.[8]

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[7] Ibid.

[8] Ibid.

While both parents and administrators of "Christian" Schools in both states insisted that they were not opposed to integrated education, it was found that more than 95% of the students enrolled in fundamentalists schools in these states were white; fewer than 2% were black. No black teachers were employed by these schools in either state.

The segregated nature of these schools might have merely reflected the segregated nature of the sponsoring churches, or it could have been a reflection of divergent values in the black and white communities, since respondents indicated that the only blacks who would be permitted to enroll were "those who are willing to abide by our standards." A more basic issue than integrated schools, it appeared, was integrated marriage. All respondents from both states strongly opposed interracial marriage, although their reasons for doing so remained unclear.[9]

The majority of students enrolled in these schools also seemed to come from relatively stable home backgrounds. Most of the families surveyed could be characterized as middle income (the average family income was $25,000); 89 of the 91 families surveyed owned their own homes. Only two of the 91 families had experienced divorce and remarriage, while the divorce rate in the general population is one in two.[10]

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[9] Ibid.

[10] Ibid.

Chapter 5

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION

Analysis

There is little or no regulation of nonpublic schools in most states, and fundamentalist groups are resisting attempts to impose any.[1] While this resistance has been successful to date, the issue has not been finally resolved, and it seems likely to be a source of continued controversy. For related reasons, these schools will continue to resist data collection concerning their growth.

The motivation for founding and maintaining nonpublic school appears to be more than racial prejudice. In recent decades religious influences in American public education have eroded rapidly. Many evangelical Protestants have come to believe that the public schools now espouse a philosophy that is completely secular, perhaps even antireligious. Hence many conservative Protestants have withdrawn their children from public schools and have established sectarian schools with quite different standards and curricula (as did the bible institutes of the past).

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[1]Fundamentalist successfully challenged the right of the state to regulate their schools in Ohio (Ohio v. Whisner, 351 N.E. 2d 750, Ohio, 1976) and Vermont (Vermont v. Lebarge, 134 Vt. 276 (1976). Similar challenges are under way in Kentucky (Kentucky State Board of Education v. Hinton, Franklin Circuit Court, Division 1, Civil Action No. 88314, 1978) and North Carolina (State of North Carolina v. Columbus Christian Academy et al., 78-OVS-1678).

Fundamentalist educators perceive a basic philosophical difference between themselves and the leaders of public education. Like the seventeenth-century Puritans, they believe in the "innate depravity of man." Because they believe that the corrupt nature of humanity can be changed only through a supernatural infusion of Divine grace, religious "conversion" becomes the basis of all education. Furthermore, since human nature is utterly depraved, children require strict supervision and authoritarian guidance if they are not to be overcome by Satan and the evil within their own nature.[2]

Fundamentalists see public education, by contrast, as proceeding on John Dewey's conviction that human nature is basically good, that students will naturally seek the highest and best if left to themselves, and that the adversary is therefore not Satan or an evil nature but poverty, ignorance, and prejudice. Fundamentalists try to approach the educational task from a different philosophical perspective, using different methodology and pursuing different goals.

Because they perceive that the Protestant ethic has disappeared from public education philosophy, fundamentalists have voiced an increasing nostalgia and a desire to return to the practices of former days. One hears frequent references to "old-time religion," "old-fashioned" virtures, and the "faith of our fathers." This has produced schools that attempt to recreate the environment of past generations. "Rock" music, movies, and most television programs are forbidden; hair and clothing styles resemble those of a bygone era; textbooks stress "traditional" concepts in math, while education gets

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[2]Nordin, op. cit., p. 393.

"back to basics." Sex roles are sharply defined, and school policies are enforced through the administration of corporal punishment by an authoritarian teacher or principal.[3]

Like the Amish, with whom they share a common origin, fundamentalists seek the security of the past and have rejected the values of modern society in favor of an earlier and simpler mode of life. This similarity was acknowledged by the courts in Kentucky and Ohio, which have granted fundamentalist schools an exemption from state regulation similar to that earlier accorded the Amish.[4]

While the Amish are readily identified as a distinct cultural group by the fact that they live in separate communities, reject modern technology, and dress in a distinct manner, the fundamentalist subculture is less readily apparent. Fundamentalists are dispersed through the larger community, accept most modern technology, and dress in a more conventional (though sometimes distinctive) manner. However, like the Amish, they comprise a distinctive group based on religious beliefs. Also, like the Amish, their practice of religion extends to virtually all areas of life.

In their 1953 study, The Small Town in Mass Society, Arthur Vidich and Joseph Bensman found that the only ties fundamentalists had to the larger community were political and educational.[5] In this context, the development of religious schools by fundamentalists

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[3]Ibid.

[4]Kentucky State Board of Education v. Hinton, supra; Ohio v. Whisner, supra.

[5]Arthur J. Vidich and Joseph Bensman, The Small Town in Mass Society (N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1968), p. 255.

churches, may be viewed as representing a severing of educational ties and as another step in their withdrawal from the community and from modern society. This withdrawal seems likely to continue and even accelerate, as fundamentalists remain locked into rigid, theologically based positions on many issues while American society moves forward. As this occurs, it seems likely that increasing numbers of fundamentalist parents will withdraw their children from public schools.

Conclusion

As this process accelerates, American education must assess the impact on society of the withdrawal of large numbers of students from public education. The courts must weigh the parents' right to direct the religious upbringing of their children against the right of the children as citizens to know, to be exposed to a wide diversity of viewpoints, and to join the mainstream of American society. As is true with all cultural minorities, the relationship of fundamentalists to the larger society presents both a problem and a challenge. At issue is the right to maintain cultural diversity in an increasingly complex and interdependent society.

In the early days of our republic, Henry David Thoreau wrote, "If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. Let him step to the music which he hears, however measured or far away."[1]

Fundamentalists are listening to a different drummer, and they are marching resolutely toward their established values. While their

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[1]Henry David Thoreau, Walden, XVIII (1854).

right to do so is not in question, their right to take a growing percentage of American's youth there with them, is.

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